

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 674
By Burchett

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Lois Emma Swisher
Duncan of Knoxville.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the death of Lois Emma Swisher Duncan; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Duncan was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for her fellow citizens in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, born in Iowa City, Iowa, in 1917, one of seven children of Jacob A. Swisher, the local school superintendent, and his wife, Nora, Lois Emma Swisher attended Iowa Wesleyan College in Mount Pleasant; and

WHEREAS, Lois Swisher first visited Knoxville in 1941 and is said to have liked it so much she decided to stay and begin working for JC Penney; she met her future husband at a YWCA dance the next year, while the future congressman was still a student at the University of Tennessee, and they married three months later; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Duncan was the widow of Representative John J. Duncan, R-Knoxville, who served in the United States House of Representatives from 1964 until his death in 1988; Representative Duncan was succeeded by his son, Representative John J. "Jimmy" Duncan, Jr., also a Tennessee Republican and Knoxville resident who still serves the State's second Congressional district; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Duncan was deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Lois Swisher Duncan was the proud mother of Jimmy Duncan, Joe Duncan, Beverly Gleason, and Becky Massey; and

WHEREAS, for more than four decades, Lois Swisher Duncan was at the elbow of prestige and power as the wife of one congressman and the mother of another; she will be

remembered as a woman of common sense with a practical nature, admired and revered for her gracious and cheerful demeanor, yet humble enough to “let Daddy have the spotlight,” according to her daughter, Beverly; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Duncan was a peacemaker who didn’t like arguments and wanted everyone to get along; during the time when her father was in Congress, daughter Becky said, Mrs. Duncan was “the glue that made sure the family stayed together” as it moved back and forth between homes in Washington and Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, Mrs. Duncan was affiliated with the American Legion Auxiliary, and for forty years she headed the Girls’ State student legislature; she was also an active member of the Alpha Xi Delta Alumni Club and the Knoxville Akima Club; and

WHEREAS, her daughter, Beverly Gleason, remembers a woman who opened her arms, heart, and home to everyone she knew; “she had Scout troops sleeping on her floor, and she would just feed them and take them on a great tour of Washington,” she said; and

WHEREAS, Lois Swisher Duncan leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; on the final pages of her autobiography she wrote, “My only advice to you is to love life and savor every moment you can with those you love,”; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Lois Emma Swisher Duncan, mother of Congressman John J. “Jimmy” Duncan, Jr., reflecting fondly upon her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family and many friends of Lois Swisher Duncan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.